

## **Planning for School Meetings**

### **Suggestions for Parents of Children with Special Needs**

School meetings are a wonderful educational opportunity to come up with goals for your child. They can also provide a chance for you to express concerns and opinions, as well as gather helpful information.

Your child should be involved in the meetings whenever possible. This will help your child to identify needs as well as develop problem-solving skills. You are your child's most effective advocate, and by being your child's advocate, you will model behavior that will help promote your child's independence.

Here are some things you can do to make the most of your school meetings:

- Arrive for these meetings early. This will help you size up the environment as well as the persons involved in this process.
- Take a seat at the head of the table if possible and bring a notebook, pen, and a briefcase if you have one. This will send a message that you mean business and that you are very interested in what happens as a result of the meeting.
- Remember to smile and greet each person involved in the meeting. Once again remember to smile. These people will be helping your child to become successful at school.
- Make sure your tone is assertive but not aggressive. Being overly demanding or aggressive will only cause alienation of the people who can help your child.
- Compliment those persons who have made an effort to help your child achieve success. This will help foster team effort and collaboration.

More...

- Come prepared for your meeting by having a list of questions. Consider the following questions to see if they might be appropriate:
  1. What testing has been done that will help identify my child's strengths and weaknesses, as well as identify challenges to learning in this school environment?
  2. What can be done to meet my child's health needs? What therapies are available for my child?
  3. What efforts or changes can be made in my child's classroom environment to help him/her achieve success?
    - Can my child be allowed to have more time to complete assignments or take tests?
    - Is tutoring available?
    - Can my child be assigned an aide or personal assistant?
    - Are elevators available and are restrooms, lunchrooms, and labs A.D.A. compliant?
    - Do you have a school nurse available? What hours would he/she be available to assist my child if needed?
  4. Has the school guidance counselor met with my child to discuss Vocational Rehabilitation possibilities? If not, when will this be done?
  5. Who does my child need to talk to if other students attempt to bully or make fun of him/her? What efforts will be made to intervene?
  6. What extra-curricular activities are available to promote self-confidence, develop social skills as well as friendship with peers, and contacts with mentors?
  7. What transition planning will be done for my child?
  8. What can I do as a parent to help encourage educational success at home?
  9. When do I receive a written summary of all testing done as well as a summary of this meeting?
  10. When do we meet again to see how the above questions or concerns are being resolved?
- Lastly, soon after your meeting, make a phone call or write a note thanking the persons who were involved in the meeting. Tell those persons that you look forward to working together to help your child reach his or her maximum potential.